

Being Before Doing

We live in a time when there is so much excellent material written about ministry, leadership, and the work of the kingdom. In addition, we have such ready access to so much of that material. The internet, e-readers, smartphones, and tablets all can become great tools for the pastor who wants to learn and grow.

It seems, though, that much of what is written is about how to *do* – how to do ministry, how to lead, how to preach to millennials, how to raise funds. You get the idea. And I would be among the first to say that these issues are extremely relevant, powerfully helpful, and keenly needed.

However, we should remember that there is a more fundamental issue for those in ministry than the doing. At the core of it all, there is this whole issue of being. Who we are, in the long run, determines whether our ministry will be fruitful, whether people will follow our leadership, and even whether our lives will have much impact in the work of the kingdom.

As we move farther into 2012, I hope we can focus on the foundation of who we are, not at the expense of our doing, but so that our doing grows out of who we are as children of God, called by him to serve and to lead. Real power in ministry, in leadership, and in impacting the world is not found in technique or leadership skills, but rather in the life of a person who is living connected to God, who has a healthy and growing relationship with him, and who then does ministry that flows out of that relationship.

With that in mind, let's renew our focus on the issue of who we *are*, so that what we *do* can have power and impact.

First of all, time alone with God is non-negotiable. No relationship is healthy without appropriate time given to it. One recent study suggests that only 26% of those in ministry today spend time with God on a daily basis. No wonder ministry seems so hard sometimes! This time with God can take on whatever format works for you. Avoid formulas, ritual, and a rigidity that makes that time with him seem more like an obligation than a joy. Talk to him, listen to him, enjoy him, obey him, and express to him that you love him.

Also critical for those of you who are married and who may have a family is the reality that not only are you a child of God, but a spouse, and perhaps a parent. Ministry is most effective when we recognize that, and when we allow that knowledge to become part of our foundation of *being* – it is, after all, who we are. One cannot really do ministry in a healthy way and at the same time have unhealthy and neglected family relationships.

One other issue seems vitally important. In a day in which busyness and tiredness characterize most of us, particularly those in ministry, the concept of the Sabbath addresses us at the heart of who we are. We were created to rest – not just physically, but to rest in God, to be renewed by him and strengthened by him. Far too many of those in ministry feel like the work of God cannot continue if they take a day off, or a vacation. But in reality, the opposite of that is really true. We were created for godly rest, and that rest in turn strengthens the foundation of who we are, so that what we then do has power and impact beyond ourselves.

Who we are matters; it matters ahead of what we do. When who we are is who we were created and called to be, our doing can then make a difference. So would you consider allowing your doing to flow out of your being? Allow that time with God to give your life anointing, purpose and direction. Draw strength from those people God has placed in your life for you to love and who love you. Rest, so you can be healthy in your leading.

The world awaits those who will impact it as those created, called, and sent by God. This generation isn't looking for another technique, or another tired leader doing ministry out of his or her own strength. This generation longs for authenticity, for someone who is connected to God and who can in turn help them make that connection. Now could be the time you become that person!